

J E S U S C H R I S T

T H E

*T R U E G O D:*

A

S E R M O N.

IN WHICH

*The DIVINITY of our LORD JESUS CHRIST*

I S

PROVED AND ILLUSTRATED.

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## JESUS CHRIST THE TRUE GOD.

### A SERMON.

1 JOHN v. 20.

*This is the true God\*.*

WHEN one is going to engage in any business of importance, it certainly concerns him to know, that the grounds upon which he proceeds are good, every way sufficient to support his intended operations. That this manner of procedure is consistent with wisdom and prudence, every one must grant, even as it has a respect to the affairs of the present life. If, then, it be commendable, as it has a respect to our present and temporal affairs, how much more must it be so, as it has a respect to our spiritual and eternal concerns? Mistakes, committed within the limits of time, may be got rectified; but after death there is no remission of sin. The tree, as it falls, must lie; if death find us out of Christ, we are undone for ever. After the pale conqueror hath put us, in our sins, beyond the limits of time, and removed us from the joyful sound of the gospel trumpet, the door of mercy is shut upon us, and all hope of mercy is cut off. It does, therefore, highly concern us to know, that we build for eternity on a sure foundation; such a foun-

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dation

\* The following discourse, (but not so full as it now appears,) was delivered on occasion of a Fast observed by the Associate Presbytery of Kirkaldy, at Leslie, on Tuesday the 2d of March 1790.

dation, as will support us under all our present crosses, insure our safety in the awful hour of death, and cause us remain unshaken, even in the impartial scrutiny of the last judgment. Professing, then, to depend upon Jesus Christ for these, and every other article of our eternal salvation, ought we not to be well assured that he is a complete Saviour, that he is able and willing to save us with an everlasting salvation? Unless we have this view of him, how can we depend upon him, and have comfort in him, as our own Saviour? In-order, then, that we may get a believing view and apprehension of him, for all the ends and purposes of our salvation, the words of the text, in which he is set forth as a Person of infinite perfection, claim our most serious attention.

That the apostle John was the writer of this epistle, we see no reason to doubt. His main scope and design in it is, to prove and illustrate the divine and mediatory character of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having pursued this design at considerable length, he comes, in verses 7th and 8th of this chapter, to lead a most unexceptionable proof, in support of this radical doctrine of the Christian religion. Three witnesses, who bear record to the truth of this doctrine, God the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, are in heaven; and other three witnesses, the spirit, the water, and the blood, who do all agree in the same testimony, are in the church on earth. These witnesses, being the best that are to be found in heaven and on earth, the apostle draws from their joint testimony, the conclusion in the text, *This is the true God.* In these words we have a person spoken of, and something said concerning him.

i. We have a person spoken of. That the pronoun *this*, in the beginning of the text, has our Lord Jesus Christ for its antecedent, is quite plain. He being the person spoke of in the immediately preceding context, as the Son of God who is come, as giving his people an understanding to know him that

that is true, and in whom they that thus know him are, by vital union to his person, there can be no reasonable doubt, that he is the person spoken of in the text.

2. We have something said concerning him. He is *the true God*. By the true God here, we understand *Him*, who is God by nature. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, being the person here spoken of, is God by nature. He is God in all the truth of divinity, and the Son of God in all the truth of divine personality. He is thus the True God, in opposition to all false gods, and as infinitely above all official ones. He is truth itself, in opposition to all falsehood; and rectitude itself, in opposition to all error. He is the truth of all the promises, prophecies, and types, respecting the true Messiah. He is "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness;" he is "*the truth.*" *This is the true God.*

These words, then, teach us, *That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God.*

The method we design to observe on this subject, is,

I. To prove and illustrate the doctrine. And then,

II. Deduce some inferences from the subject for improvement.

I. We are to prove and illustrate the doctrine; or shew more fully, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God. *This is the true God.* And,

1. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his eternal Sonship. This glorious Person is the Son of God, by an eternal, necessary, and ineffable generation. That he is the Son of God, as all rational creatures are, Socinians grant; but that he is the Son of God by an eternal and necessary generation, they deny. Were they indeed to grant this, it would overturn the whole of their religious scheme. This, therefore, in the most pointed manner, they deny; but for the same reason they deny this, they must deny all generation together: For who of the wise men of this world in any one instance, can fully understand and explain

plain this? "As thou knowest not what is the way  
 " of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the  
 " womb of her that is with child, even so thou  
 " knowest not the works of God who maketh all." Since, therefore, they who deny our Lord's divinity, allow him to have had a generation in time, but deny him one that is necessary and eternal, because their reason cannot comprehend it, "they are partial  
 " in themselves, and are become judges of evil  
 " thoughts." It must, indeed, be granted, that no mere man can either comprehend, or fully explain the nature of our Lord's eternal generation: This, however, is no way inconsistent with our believing it to be true, upon the footing of the divine testimony; unless it can, at least, be made evident, that God is capable of imposing an absurdity upon us; but it were, surely, the height of impiety so much as to imagine this. The best reason for our believing any thing to be true, being, that God hath said it; therefore, we have the best reason for believing the truth of our Lord's eternal generation, God having declared this to us in his word. That this is an article of the divine testimony, is quite clear in various parts of scripture. God, in the person of the Father, says to our Lord Jesus Christ, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee \*." These words were spoken in the present time, long before our Lord was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary; and therefore they must refer to some generation different from that. The day there spoken of, then, being undoubtedly to be understood of God's day of eternity, and not of any day of ours; the begetting there spoken of, must, of consequence, be in the day of eternity, which, in respect of God, is a present now, an invariable day, without either beginning or end. There being then, neither past nor future in eternity, our Lord's generation must be always present. It never was future, nor will it ever be past, in any period of time. But the scripture cited, though it be sufficient to support the truth of

\* Psal. ii. 7.

of this observation, is not, however, the only one upon which it stands. Our Lord being often spoken of in scripture, as the Son of God, before he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and having no other generation ascribed to him in time before that, therefore he must have had a generation from everlasting, there being no medium between time and absolute eternity. And hence God, by the prophet Micah, says, " But thou Beth-lehem " Ephratah, though thou be little among the thou- " sands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come " forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel ; whose " goings forth have been from of old, from everla- " sting \*." But if Christ be distinguished from God the Father, in respect of his goings forth from everlast-  
ing, it must be in respect of his distinct personali-  
ty or subsistence ; he must then have his personali-  
ty from the Father. But the scripture informs us  
of no other way in which he has this, but by genera-  
tion. His goings forth, or personality, then, be-  
ing from everlasting, his generation *must* also be  
from everlasting. " And again, when he bringeth  
" his first begotten into the world, he saith, And  
" let all the angels of God worship him †." But if  
God brought his first begotten into the world, he  
must have had this first begotten *before* he brought  
him into it ; and consequently he must have had  
him, as his first begotten, from everlasting. Our  
Lord, then, being the Son of God by an eternal ge-  
neration, *must* also be God by nature, the same in  
substance, equal in power and in glory, with God  
the Father, and God the Holy Ghost : For, as the  
divine essence is infinitely simple and uncompound-  
ed, it cannot be parted among two or more persons.  
At the same time, a trinity of Persons in the undi-  
vided Godhead, is no absurdity at all in the ear of  
right reason, upon the footing of the divine testimo-  
ny, though we cannot fully either understand or ex-  
plain it.

2. That

\* Micah v. 2.

† Heb. i. 6.

2. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his having the essential perfections of Deity ascribed to him in scripture. Being the Son of God by eternal generation, he must also be possessed of all the perfections of Deity. The true God, even according to the judgment of right reason cannot be divided ; for right reason does not admit of more first causes than one : Right reason, then, admitting of only one first cause, scripture does expressly ascribe such perfections to our Lord Jesus Christ, as do sufficiently prove him to be that first cause, or the true God. The prophet Isaiah calls him, "The Everlasting Father \*," or, as some read the words, "The Father of eternity." Our Lord speaks of himself as omnipotent, when he says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty †." He said, and still says to his disciples and servants, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen ‡." He spoke of himself, as both in heaven and on earth at the same time, saying, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven ||." And do not these testimonies imply omnipresence ? The apostle Peter, being asked repeatedly by our Lord if he loved him, appealed to his omniscience as to the truth of this, saying, "Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee §." Jesus sometimes checked this apostle for his rashness, but we have no account of his checking him for ascribing omniscience to him. And the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, evidently ascribes immutability to him, saying, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever \*\*." To this purpose, in the beginning of the same epistle, he also introduces God the Father, as speaking to our Lord, saying, "And, Thou, Lord,

\* Isaiah ix. 6.

† Rev. i. 8.

‡ Matth. xxviii. 20.

|| John iii. 13.

§ John xxi. 17.

\*\* Heb. xiii. 8.

“ Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation  
 “ of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of  
 “ thine hands : They shall perish but thou remain-  
 “ est ; and they all shall wax old as a garment ; and  
 “ as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they  
 “ shall be changed ; but thou art the same, and thy  
 “ years shall not fail.”

These scriptures we have cited, do plainly shew, that the perfections of Deity are ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ. But will God give his glory to another, or his praise to any creature ? Is it possible to vindicate the prophetic and apostolic ascriptions of divine perfection to a mere man, however excellent ? Will God put any of his creatures upon a level with himself ? Will he load any of them with honours to which they have no manner of right ? Will he pull off his masty crown, and put it upon the head of a mortal ? Will he put off his glorious robes, that they may adorn a creature. That be far from him : “ Shall not the Judge of all the “ earth do right ? ” If the person, then, who possesses the essential perfections of Deity, be the true God, our Lord Jesus Christ *is the true God.*

3. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his being set up from everlasting, as the Head of the New Covenant. That there is an everlasting covenant, is not to be disputed. The royal Psalmist, in his last words, plainly confesses this, saying, “ Although my house be not so with “ God ; yet he hath made with me an everlasting “ covenant, ordered in all things and sure ; for “ this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although “ he make it not to grow \* ; ” or, “ Although he “ do not yet make it bring forth the incarnate Mes- “ iah.” That this is the covenant of grace, is plain from the whole tenor of scripture ; for, according to scripture, salvation is to be had only by this covenant. If it should be said, that this covenant is not from everlasting, but is made with be-  
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\* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

lievers in time, and called everlasting, only in respect of its consequences, then the scripture does plainly contradict such assertions. For scarcely is there any thing plainer in scripture, than that Christ was set up from everlasting, as the Head of this covenant: And hence, the personal wisdom of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was\*." He was thus set up, by God in the person of the Father, as the Head of the New Covenant; his Father called him to his mediatory work; and hence he says, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles †." Having called him to his mediatory work, he also invested him with a mediatory commission and offices, to be executed by him: And hence our Lord said, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart ‡." "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." After what order, then, was he called to be a high priest? Was it after the order of Aaron, in which there was a succession of priests? No: How then? It was after the order of Melchisedec; for his Father said unto him, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec;" that is, without beginning and without end, according to the scripture account of Melchisedec's priesthood. It is evident, then, that our Lord Jesus Christ is a priest from everlasting to everlasting. But he is also an everlasting prophet: And hence he said to Simon Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." There is a blessed hereafter coming, when

\* Prov. viii. 22, 23.

† Isa. xlvi. 6.

‡ Psal. xl. 7, 8.

when he will explain the mystery of his works to his disciples. He takes the book of the divine decrees, and looses the seven seals thereof: He teaches his disciples in every period of the church. With what perspicuity will he unfold the mystery of Providence to the whole church, when the mystery of God shall be finished? Nor is he ever without a designation to a kingdom; and hence God the Father says, " Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

Since, then, our Lord Jesus Christ is, from everlasting to everlasting, invested with mediatory offices, he *must* also himself have an everlasting existence; but there being none from everlasting, save the true God, therefore it *must* follow, that our Lord Jesus Christ *is the true God*. And, indeed, though we were to overlook the absurdity of a creature existing from everlasting, or from some imaginary point before the beginning of time, yet it were to reproach the wisdom and prudence of God, so much as to imagine, that he invested a creature, however much dignified, with a commission and offices to be executed by him as our Redeemer. None, surely, save he who is God by nature, is sufficient for such a work as this.

4. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his undertaking, from everlasting, to accomplish the work of our redemption. Having been called by his Father to this work, he really engaged to perform it; he engaged to be his Father's servant; he engaged to approach unto God, as an absolute God, instead of elect men. " And their nobles (or his glorious One) shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto

" me? faith the Lord\*." He delighted in this work from everlasting. Never did any other servant rejoice so much, in the service of even the best of masters, as he rejoiced to serve his Father. No creature could rejoice in the work of God from everlasting, but Christ did; for he says, " Then was I " by him, as one brought up with him; and I " was daily his delight, rejoicing always before " him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his " earth, and my delights were with the sons of " men†." It could not be a quality but a person that spoke after this manner. Speaking of his undertaking from everlasting as his Father's servant, he says, " Sacrifice and offering thou didst " not desire, mine ears hast thou opened." Or, as if he had said, " Thou sawest that finite sacrifices " and offerings would be of no avail for the taking " away of sin: Thou sawest the insufficiency of the " blood of bulls and of goats for being an atonement " for sin. These offerings rising up to thee even " in columns of fire, could not meet with thine ac- " ceptance, as a redress for the injury done to thy " law and justice by the sins of men. In order, " therefore, that the sins of thy people might be " expiated, thou didst take me engaged from ever- " lasting, to become a sin-offering for them, in the " fulness of time, and to serve thee for ever." And so he adds, " Then said I, Lo, I come, in the " volume of the book it is written of me: I delight " to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is with- " in my heart‡." These words, too, as expressive of our Lord's coming into the world to execute his everlasting undertaking, do evidently imply his everlasting existence: For, since he came into the world, he *must* have had a being before, and so a being from everlasting, there being nothing before time to exist in, but absolute eternity. Socinians may place the beginning of time where they please, in as many imaginary points as suits their scheme, but time really is nothing else but the boundary of created

\* Jer. xxx. 21.

† Prov. viii. 30, 31.

‡ Psal. xl.

created and mutable existence. Since, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ did, from everlasting, engage to execute the work of our redemption, it does certainly follow, that he *is the true God*.

5. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his receiving the book of the divine decrees, and laying open its contents to the church. As the great antitypical Prophet, it belongs to him to lay open the eternal will and pleasure of God to men : And hence he says, “ All things are delivered unto me “ of my Father ; and no man knoweth the Son but “ the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, “ save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will “ reveal him \*.” With this design the great, the comprehensive book of the divine decrees, was given into the hand of Jesus Christ, that he might lay open its important contents to the church, in their several orders. Agreeable to this is what the apostle John saw and heard in vision : Says he, “ And I saw “ a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice, “ Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose “ the seven seals thereof ? And no man in heaven, “ or in earth, neither under the earth, was able to “ open the book, neither to look thereon. And “ I wept much, because no man was worthy to “ open and to read the book, neither to look “ thereon. And one of the elders said unto “ me, Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe “ of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to “ open the book, and to loose the seven seals there- “ of †.” That the wonderful Person here spoken of, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the root of David, is our Lord Jesus Christ, might be shewn at considerable length, by comparing the passage of scripture cited, with others that are parallel to it. We shall only, however, here observe, that the patriarch Jacob certainly had Jesus Christ in his eye, when, in blessing Judah, he spoke of him as a Lion. And the prophet Isaiah also certainly spake of the same glorious Person, as the root of Jesse, when he said,

said, " And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, " which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to " it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be " glorious." But if Jesse's root, then he must also be the root of David, who was Jesse's stem. It was, therefore, Jesus Christ who prevailed to open the book of the divine decrees, and to loose the seven seals thereof. He was found every way qualified for this task, being omniscient, as we have already seen, he can read all those secret purposes, which had, till time commenced, lain hid in the infinite mind.

But is any mere man, even the wisest of men, qualified for this task? Who, save he who is God by nature, can fully understand and communicate the most secret purposes of God's eternal will? None but he, surely, who was in the everlasting council, can reveal what was then enacted. Who can " by " searching find out God? Who can find out the " Almighty to perfection?" Can pretended rationalists do it? Can the most accomplished of these proud sages tell, what is in the womb of the divine decree before it bring forth? Resembling the crooked serpent, they may guess at future events, but they cannot certainly know them, unless God reveal them to them. Is it possible for that which is finite to comprehend that which is infinite? But Jesus Christ knows all these things. He takes all things at once with his comprehensive eye. His knowledge of his Father's nature, will, and purposes, is as perfect as his Father's knowledge is of him: And hence he says, " As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the " Father;" and, " I and my Father are one." Do some say, that this oneness or unity, is to be understood of will and design, but not of nature? Well, supposing this for a moment, but not granting it to be true, to what will it amount? If God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, be one in will and design, then they must eternally be so, if eternal will and design may be ascribed to God; for otherwise, they are

are not absolutely one in will and design, as here declared concerning them. If, then, eternally one in will and design, they must also be one in being or essence ; for, to suppose two eternal beings, or minds, willing and designing separately, is certainly most absurd. These divine Persons, then, being one in being, must have a perfect knowledge of one another. The Father has a perfect knowledge of the Son, and the Son has a perfect knowledge of the Father. This knowledge, however, the Son has not as man, or according to his human nature ; in this respect his knowledge is finite : " And Jesus increased in " wisdom ;" but this knowledge he has as God, his divine knowledge being infinite. Being able, then, to investigate and lay open the divine decrees, it evidently appears, that he *is the true God.*

6. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his having the names peculiar to the true God ascribed to him in scripture. Every one should know, that God's names are expressive of his perfections. God, by revealing these to us, designs to shew us what he is. It is not, therefore, so much as to be imagined, that they can be given absolutely to any creature : But that they are given, in their most absolute sense, to our Lord Jesus Christ in scripture, none may deny, but at the hazard of plunging immediately into the black gulf of Deism. The name JEHOVAH is expressive of God's eternal, independent, and necessary existence : His " name " alone is Jehovah ;" but this name is given to our Lord Jesus Christ : And hence Moses says, That " the Lord (or Jehovah) rained upon Sodom and " upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire, from the Lord " (or Jehovah) out of heaven \*." The first of these names is given to the Angel of the Covenant, who appeared to Abram in the plains of Mamre, and whom that venerable patriarch repeatedly called Lord, (or Jehovah,) in the conversation he had with him on that occasion : Is this divinely dignified Person, then, Jehovah in the Socinian sense, as meaning

\* Gen. xix. 24.

ing only one divine Person that is properly called by this name? No; for here we find two persons both absolutely called by this name; the one upon earth, raining upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from another out of heaven. The first Person, then, here spoken of is the Angel of the Covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the other is God, in the person of the Father. Nor is Moses singular in this testimony; for, though Socinians will not allow our Lord the honour of this name, at least in its full import, nor allow us the benefit of any mediatory righteousness at all from him; yet the prophet Jeremiah expressly says, "This is his name  
" whereby he shall be called, The Lord (or Jehovah)  
" our Righteousness \*." So that Jehovah, which is the incommunicable name of the only true God, is, in scripture, as absolutely given to our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is to God the Father.

Our Lord is, in scripture, expressly called Adonai, which points him out as the foundation or basis of all created existence. By his almighty arm he upholds both the world, and the church in the world. "He is before all things, and by him all things consist. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." And so the Psalmist sweetly sings of him, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, (or Adonai,) Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool †." That Adonai here, is our Lord Jesus Christ, is evident from the whole of the psalm, he being described in it, in respect of all his mediatory offices and states. The prophet Isaiah, also, designs him by this name, when he speaks of him as the King of glory, saying, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord (or Adonai) sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." And afterwards, when he is getting his commission renewed, to go to a stiff-necked and rebellious people, he says, "Also I heard

" the

\* Jer. xxiii. 6.

† Psal. cx. 1.

" the voice of the Lord (or Adonai,) saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said " I, Here am I, send me \*." But that Adonai here is our Lord Jesus Christ, is evident from the testimony of the evangelist John, saying, " These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him †."

Our Lord calls himself " I AM," which signifies being itself, underived existence, never beginning to be, always present, and never ceasing to be. And " God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you ‡." God, who in this place, calls himself " I AM," is just the Angel of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, who appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush at Horeb. At the time of his public ministry, too, he said unto the Jews, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." But is not this, in effect, to say, " I am the necessary existing Being?" As analogous to this name, our Lord also calls himself " Alpha and Omega." Says he, " I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending ||." Alpha and Omega, being the names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, as connected in their application to our Lord Jesus Christ, do point him out as the first and the last, as the first of causes, and the last of ends. God hath made all things for himself, for the display of his own glory.

Our Lord is also, in scripture, expressly called God, which, in its absolute sense, means the most powerful and best of Beings. " The Word (the personal Word) was God;" or, as the original will bear, " The Word was, is, and will be God." Some men, indeed, have been called gods on account of their office, as ruling under God; or, in order to impress upon the minds of such as rule under him, that they are to rule well: They that rule for

\* Isa. vi. 1.—8. † John xii. 41. ‡ Exod. iii. 14. || Rev. i. 8.

for God, must use their influence for good ends. But no where, in scripture, is any mere man called God absolutely, and with the epithets peculiar to Deity: Our Lord Jesus Christ, however, is thus called God. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says, "That he is over all, God blessed for ever \*." In his epistle to Titus, he calls him, "the great "God †;" and Jude calls him, "the only wise "God ‡." These designations belong only to the true God, and so cannot, without blasphemy, be given to any creature. Such, then, are some of the names peculiar to the true God, which are, in scripture, given, in their most absolute sense, to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is, therefore, *the true God.*

7. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his being the Creator of all things: "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him: For he spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast § :" He said in the beginning, "Let there be light, and there was light :" He commanded the light to shine out of darkness :" Whatever he willed to exist, came forth of the womb of non-entity, at his creating word; "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were made by him and for him." It must not be said, that all things were made by him only as an instrument, or second cause; for the work of creation is ascribed to him in scripture, as his own proper work. He only said, Let the vast creation be, and it was. "Thus saith the Lord thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself \*\*."

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\* Rom. ix. 5. † Titus ii. 13. ‡ Jude 25. § Psal. xxxiii. 8, 9.

\*\* Isa. xliv. 24.

Our Lord gave a display of his infinite power, in calling all things out of nothing. Before time, there was nothing but the first cause in three Persons, and therefore nothing besides to work upon. Had the universe been made of some pre-existing substance, it might indeed, in this case, be called a new formation, but with no propriety at all; a creation, for to create, means the bringing of something into being, which did not formerly exist.

In creating all things, our Lord did also give a display of his infinite wisdom. What wisdom, but that which is infinite could frame and arrange the universe? It surely required infinite wisdom to adjust all the parts of this vast scheme. Must not he be infinitely wise, who gave laws to nature, and put the millions of worlds in a condition to obey them? What creature is wise enough to execute such a work as this? Does not the meanest reptile baffle the investigation of the wisest philosophers?

But our Lord, in creating all things, did also give a display of his infinite goodness. What, but a cause infinitely good, could make all things very good? But our Lord made all things very good; every thing very good, after its kind. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." But this God is the creating Word, our Lord Jesus Christ: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." No cause, surely, but one infinitely good, could make all created intelligence perfectly happy, and make suitable provision for the whole of created existence? Has any creature such store of goodness under his hand, and at his disposal?

Is not the work of creation, then, peculiar to God? Can any power, less than that which is infinite, call something out of nothing? Can any wisdom, less than that which is infinite, arrange the universe?

niverse? And can any goodness, less than that which is infinite, give being and provision to the whole of created existence? Can reason demonstrate, how any creature may create others? Will it not be at as great a loss to do this, as to demonstrate how there are three Persons in the undivided Godhead, and how the eternal Father begetteth the eternal Son. All things, then, being created by our Lord Jesus Christ, there is sufficient reason to think, that he *is the true God.*

8. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his being the Redeemer of elect men. To create men, was a great work, a work truly worthy of God, and which none but the true God could do; but to redeem sinners, is, without doubt, a much greater work. But this is also the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Redeemer of God's elect men. Job speaks of him, as living in his own time, as his own Redeemer, saying, "I know  
" that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand  
" at the latter day upon the earth \*." To the same purpose Isaiah speaks, saying, "Thus saith the  
" Lord the king of Israel, and his Redeemer the  
" Lord of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last,  
" and besides me there is no God †." The Redeemer, therefore, did not only exist in Job's time, but he also exists from everlasting to everlasting. He never was, he never will be, divested of his relation to us, as our Redeemer.

But the truth of our Lord's divinity may be made farther evident from his executing the work of our redemption. This work is twofold. Our Lord redeems his people, both by price and by power. He redeems them by price. He became our Surety, from everlasting, to satisfy all the demands of God's law and justice, in our stead, in the fulness of time. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,

\* Job. xix. 25.

† Isa. xliiv. 6.

"that we might receive the adoption of sons." Being thus made under the law, he satisfied all its demands, in respect both of the principal and penal debt we owed it. He satisfied for our principal debt, by his obedience; and for our penal debt, by his suffering unto the death, or by his enduring all that wrath and curse of God, which was due to us on account of our sins. He suffered and died in our nature; but, in our nature, he also bore the wrath and curse of God for us. This was the bitter, the infinitely bitter ingredient in the cup of his sufferings. Our Lord's satisfaction does, therefore, consist in his obedience, and his bearing the curse of God due on account of our sins, in his suffering unto the death. And hence the apostle Paul says, "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." But this was a cursed death, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Our Lord's life and death, then, in the likeness of sinful flesh, do both belong to the matter of his satisfaction for us. These things which God hath joined together, ought not to be put asunder. Our Lord, indeed, repeatedly said, that this work was finished before he actually died; but before this, he did not say, it is actually finished. He intended more by his death, than to set us an example of heroic virtue. This work, indeed, was as good as finished before our Lord actually died. It was then as good as finished upon the following grounds, namely the divine decree, as rendering the finishing of it absolutely certain; our Lord's undertaking from everlasting, actually to finish it in the fulness of time; and his knowing, in the highest degree of perfection, that he was actually to finish it in his death of the cross. Upon these grounds, this work was as good as finished from everlasting. Upon these grounds it was always present as finished to the

the infinite Mind. It was upon these grounds that this work was spoken of as finished, in all the periods of the church, preceding our Lord's death of the cross. But death being really in the penalty which we incurred by breaking the covenant of works, it behoved our Surety, in giving satisfaction for our sins, really to die in our stead. Why were so many types actually put to death under the Mosaic œconomy, if the Antitype was not actually to die for our sins? Was the ceremonial law an unmeaning parade? Were we to affirm this, would we not arraign the wisdom of its Author? But that Christ actually died for our sins, or in our stead, that he might put away our sins, is put beyond all reasonable doubt by scripture-testimony. "The good shepherd giveth his life *for* the sheep.—In due time Christ died *for* the ungodly. Christ died *for* us. Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself *for* us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." These, and many other scriptures, do plainly shew, that our Lord died for us, or in our stead, as the Greek preposition rendered *for*, in the scriptures cited, does properly signify. And then, our Lord's death for us, being always expressive of the whole of his satisfaction; the whole of his satisfaction, the whole of his obedience and suffering unto the death, therefore, was for us, or in our stead.

But all this could have been of no avail to us, had it not been the satisfaction of a divine Person. Our debt being infinite, it behoved our Surety to give an infinite satisfaction for us. Nothing less could answer the demands of law and justice. But Christ "magnified the law, and made it honourable," by the obedience of his divine Person; and he purchased the church with his own infinitely precious blood; "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Christ gave *himself* for us. He was both the ransomer and the ransom. Our ransom, then, being divine, must also be

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of infinite value. It is sufficient to expiate all our sins, however many and aggravated, to deliver us from all our miseries, however complicated and great, and to procure for us all the blessings of salvation, however extensive and excellent. Accordingly, when our Lord had obeyed and suffered unto the death, having completely paid the whole of our debt into his Father's hands, as vindicating the rights of his law and justice, he was, then, fully and finally discharged from it all, in his resurrection from the dead. Nor would he have bowed his head, and given up the ghost upon the cross, unless he had been most absolutely certain, that he was to give complete satisfaction for our sins in his death, and be discharged from all the debt we owed the law and justice of God, in his resurrection. And hence the apostle Peter says, "Him being delivered by "the determinate counsel of God, ye have taken, "and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the "pains of death, because it was not possible that he "should be holden of it \*." Having finished the work he had to do, as made actually under the law, our Lord could no longer be holden of death; for this was the comprehensive reason of his coming under its power. When the debt is paid, and the payment sustained, the prison door, according to justice, must be cast open. It were surely a violation of justice, to punish a person without a cause; God cannot do this. He will not punish with death, where no cause of death is. He is sovereign, but he is also infinitely just; he cannot exact either more or less than is due. Our Lord's death, then, was the last, the finishing article of the price of our redemption. And thus he redeemed by price.

Our Lord redeems, not only by price, but also by power. Though externally mean in his state of humiliation, he was, however, possessed of infinite power. He carried away all the infinite load of our

sins

fins into a land of forgetfulness. He sustained all that weight of wrath and curse that was due to us on account of our sins. He hath completely broken the chains, and removed the gates of our spiritual bondage and slavery. He sustained the stroke of that sword, which, had he not interposed, would have struck us all down to eternal perdition. He removed mountains of sin from between God and us, which never could have been removed by all the created hosts of heaven and earth. He “spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.” When about to die himself, he even then saved from death. He was death’s plagues, and the grave’s destruction. How powerful is he ! verily, he is Almighty ; and now, in his exalted state, he goes on equally successful with his work. He works, and none can hinder him. His going on with his work, in the face of opposition from hell and earth, is a sufficient demonstration of his superlative abilities. He takes away the captive of the mighty, and delivers the prey of the terrible. He causes the dead in their graves to hear his voice, live, and come forth. He raises his armies from among the dead, the exceeding dry bones in the valley of vision. He hath brought many already out of all their miseries, and we have good reason to think, that he hath many more yet to bring ; for he says, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” He will, by his power, protect and support his people in life ; preserve them in, and raise them up from death ; and, to the praise of free grace, exalt them to his glorious throne.

But what creature is fit for such a work as this ? Can one creature give satisfaction for another’s sins ? Can a finite being bear an infinite weight of wrath ? Will God accept of a finite satisfaction for an infinite offence ? What mere man, in single combat,  
could

could vanquish the devil? What creature has power to lay down his life, and to take it up again? Does such a creature fall within the sphere of Socinian knowledge? But our Lord Jesus Christ being more than equal to all these things, is deservedly to be acknowledged as *the true God*.

9. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from the miracles which he hath wrought. A miracle is an effect or work, above, or contrary unto, the ordinary laws of nature. How far second causes may go in working miracles, we do not pretend to determine. This, however, we may affirm, that every miracle is originally from God. God works miracles both mediately and immediately. He works miracles mediately. He hath wrought many miracles, both under the old and under the new testament dispensation, by means of holy men, such as his prophets and apostles; but none of these did ever pretend to work miracles by their own power, nor did they ever consider the honour resulting from them as their due; on the contrary, they positively refused it, when offered to them. Take an instance of this in the case of Peter and John, after healing a man lame from his mother's womb. "And as the lame man which was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch, which is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" But they would have all the glory of this miracle ascribed to Jesus Christ. "And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him, hath given this man perfect soundness in the presence of you all \*." Our Lord did thus work many miracles, for confirming the mission and doctrine of holy men, as from himself.

\* Acts iii. 12.—16.

self. Miracles were the divine credentials which the prophets and apostles delivered unto the church, upon the authority of which they were to be received by her.

God also works miracles immediately, or without the intervention of second causes. Jesus Christ, after this manner, in his state of humiliation, wrought many miracles, for confirming the divinity, both of his person, his mission, and the doctrines which he taught. If we consult the scriptures, they will inform us, that Jesus did many works, which no mere man of himself could do. Follow him in his history, and you will find him exhibiting many proofs of his divine power. When he entered on the exercise of his public ministry, he openly delivered his divine credentials; nor was he ever at a loss to produce these in any stage of his ministry. He turned water into wine of the best quality, when he entered on his public ministry, but all the subsequent parts of it were properly supported by such divine evidence. Did he teach the multitudes? he also fed them with a few loaves and fishes, which a little lad could carry. Did he send his disciples before him to wait his arrival, while he was secretly employed in the exercises of devotion? he went after them, walking on the sea, when it even blew an hurricane. He was, in this situation, not only safe himself, but he also afforded safety to his disciples, when in much distress. When the sea was tempestuous, he stilled its proud waves by his more powerful word. By a word, or a touch, he healed the sick, when their diseases baffled all the skill of human physicians, and all the influence of medicine. He gave sight to a man who had been blind from his birth. He restored life to the dead, not only on the deathbed, but also on the bier, and even in the grave. He dispossessed legions of devils, who were obliged to confess his divinity. Nor could devils be cast out by his disciples, but in his name, by faith in his name. A proof of this we have in the case of

one who was possessed of only one evil spirit. " And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.—Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them who had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, " We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.—" And there were seven sons of one Sceva a Jew, and chief of the priests, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded \*." What awful blasphemers then, are Socinians, who will not confess so much concerning Jesus Christ, as even the devils have done! The devils dread his infinite power, but Socinians will have him put on the scale of created existence. But why will they not confess so much as their father has confessed before them? Do they glory in being more the children of hell than devils? Do they expect to be applauded and crowned with laurels, because they have refined upon their system beyond the founder of their sect? " Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward †."

Such are some of the miracles Jesus wrought, during the time of his public ministry, in his state of humiliation. Let it not be said, that these miracles were wrought only by his means, as if he had only been an instrument or second cause by which they were done; for this cannot be supported by any proper

D evidence,

\* Acts xix. 13, 13,—16.

† Isa. i. 2,—4.

evidence. Whereas, on the other hand, we have sufficient evidence, that he wrought miracles by his own proper power. Did he not say, Let such a miracle be, and presently it was? He never acknowledged any other as the worker of miracles by his means, as his prophets and apostles did. Had he only been an instrument, or second cause, by which miracles were wrought, he would, no doubt, have done them in the name of another; but this he never did. He never prefaced a miracle he did, even by the name of God: The reason is obvious. In respect of his divine power, he is second to none. He who gave laws to nature, can, surely, when he pleases, reverse them. By a word, or a touch, he did many things which no creature can do. Had he not been the proper cause of the miracles he did, how could he have received the glory of them? But, having done these works, he also bore the glory of them. Sometimes, indeed, he shunned various expressions of this glory, from the persons upon whom he wrought miracles; but never did he deny that these were his due. When he came into a state of humiliation, it was not to receive, but to give glory. And so, when he waved many expressions of glory, he did this only as acting consistently with the state and circumstances in which he then was. Is it meet, that one in the most abject and mournful circumstances, should be crowned with laurels? Do servants claim state? Our blessed Lord, in like manner, would shew his condescension, in suiting himself to his afflicted and servile state. But farther, if our Lord did work miracles mediately, by his prophets and apostles, he could also, surely, work them immediately in human nature. But that the miracles wrought by his prophets and apostles, were done by his power, is not to be denied, since they were done only in his name. Nor did he ever reprimand any of them for giving him the glory of the miracles wrought by their means, in virtue of a commission from him to that effect.

Our Lord having, in the course of his public ministry, during his life, in the likeness of sinful flesh, wrought many miracles in proof of his divinity, did so also at the time of his death, when entering into it, and when under its power. Here we may find much decisive evidence of his divinity. When entering the list with death, in all its horrid form, he even then appeared victor. Victory declared for him in every march against, and in every encounter with his enemies, till he completely vanquished them. When just engaging with death, the cursed death of the cross, he even then, in a most remarkable manner, took away the captive of the mighty, and delivered the prey of the terrible. One of the malefactors that were crucified with him, was then plucked by his almighty hand, as a brand out of the burning. When stooping to the stroke of death himself, he even then saved a sinner out of death's jaws: And was not this a miraculous salvation? The "thief said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Let us next follow our Lord into death's territories, and there we shall also find him divine. He really died. He laid down his life, that he might take it again. But his having power to lay down his life, is a most irrefragable proof of his divinity. Has any creature a right to lay down his own life? and when laid down, has he power to take it again? Can all the sagacity of Socinians find out such a creature? or will any of themselves vie with Jesus Christ in this particular? Were the magicians of Egypt a match even for Moses? When our Lord, then, had entered into the state of the dead, when he had actually given up the ghost, did he cease to be divine? He was, even then, JEHOVAH in the human nature. The union between his soul and his body was indeed dissolved by death, but the union between his divine and human natures, in his person,

son, was not then dissolved. It was the Lord that hang on the cross, after he had given up the ghost, and it was the Lord that was buried, and lay in the grave till the third day: And hence an angel said to the women, who came after his resurrection to visit the sepulchre, "He is not here; for he is risen, " as he said: Come, see the place where the Lord "lay;" or, "the place where JEHOVAH lay;" for such is the meaning of Lord in the New Testament scriptures, when it begins with a capital letter as here. Jehovah, the divine Saviour, did, therefore, enter into the state of the dead, and continue under the power of death for about the space of thirty-six hours. All this time he was under the death of the cross, a cursed death, a death in virtue of the law-threatening, which saith, "In dying thou shalt die;" for he neither died, nor could die any other death. Having then come into this state, he had power to evidence himself divine when in it. Having had power to manifest his divinity in his life, he was able also to manifest it in his death. Nor is this to be thought a strange, or an unaccountable assertion; since he, in his death, was JEHOVAH, the *eternal, the independent, and necessary existing Being.* Our Lord was divine, in all the truth of divinity, possessed of infinite power and authority in his death, as well as in his life. It were, indeed, the height of blasphemy to maintain, that he was not; for this were, in effect, to deny his Godhead altogether. A changeable god, a god having power and authority at one time, but divested of them at another, is not God by nature. Such a god exists only in wild imagination. Such a god may suit the wish of a Socinian, but not of a saint. Our Lord had not only power to evidence himself divine in his death, but he also did so. When he veiled himself by death, he also veiled the sun with darkness. When he entered into the gloomy regions of the dead, he caused the very pillars of nature to shake. Having made the rock to tremble, from which he gave

gave the law, he also rent the rocks, when he became the end of the law. Being the end of the ceremonial law in his death, he, by his secret almighty hand, exposed those sacred mysteries, which lay concealed from public view in the most holy place, by rending the vail of the temple in twain, from the top to the bottom. Then he caused the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. This the angel Gabriel, speaking to the prophet Daniel, expressly ascribes to him, saying, "And he shall confirm the covenant " with many for one week ; and in the midst of " the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the obla- " tion to cease." Our Lord's death, being the cause of his people's life, the cause of their resurrection to a new life both of grace and glory, he then gave a proof and earnest of this, in the resurrection of many saints, who were then sleeping in their graves. And hence the evangelist Matthew says, "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud " voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the " vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top " to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the " rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and ma- " ny bodies of saints, which slept, arose \*." These

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\* Matth. xxvii. 50.—52.

We are of opinion, (notwithstanding of what a Rev. Doctor hath said to the contrary,) that these saints rose at the time of our Lord's death ; that their resurrection was a proper miraculous effect of his infinite power ; that it was, therefore, a proof of his divinity, when he was in the state of the dead ; and that the earthquake which then happened, was subservient to the production of this event. The connection of this, with the other things narrated by the evangelist Matthew, which happened at the time of our Lord's death, makes it evident to us, that they all happened at one time. We are indeed told, in the subsequent context, that these saints "came out of the graves ;" or, "out from among the graves, after our Lord's resurrection, and went in to the holy city, and appeared unto many." But the resurrection, and the sallying out, as the word signifies, of these saints from among the graves, are very different in their significations. The original word rendered *arose*, is used to express a proper resurrection. It is used to express our Lord's resurrection from the dead. And hence two of the disciples testified unto the rest, saying, "The Lord is *risen* indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

are striking evidences of our Lord's divinity, when he was in the state of the dead. He died, and yet lived in death. He was dead, according to his human

"mon\*." It is used to express the spiritual resurrection of the saints. And hence Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light †." It is used to express the resurrection of the dead at the last day. And hence Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen †." But the original word rendered, came out, or, as it might be rendered, sallying out, never, so far as we have observed, is used to express any sort of resurrection at all. The word, then, as here used, supposes the resurrection of these saints to be past. They must have risen, before they sallied out from among the tombs. If it should be asked, How, then, were they provided with food, raiment, and the other necessaries of life, before they went into the holy city? We might also ask, How were they provided with these things, then? But if these saints rose to an immortal life, as seems to be the general opinion, then they needed none of these things, either before, or after they went into the holy city. If they rose to an immortal life, they could put up as commodiously among the tombs, as in the city. The sacred history, then, both before and after the account of the coming out of these saints from among the tombs, and their going into the holy city, being filled up with events that happened during the time of our Lord's being in the state of the dead, it appears to us, that the coming forth of these saints, their going into the holy city, and appearing unto many, is referred to the history of the next chapter, by the preposition *after*, where we have various circumstances relative to our Lord's resurrection narrated. Nor is it an uncommon thing with the inspired writers, to attend more to brevity in the narration of facts, than to the times in which they happened.

How then does this account agree with such testimonies concerning Christ as these: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence \*\*;" and "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first-begotten of the dead ††?" If the saints mentioned rose before Christ, how then is he the first-born from, and the first-begotten of the dead? He may be said to be so, though his resurrection was not the first in the order of time. And that it was not the first in the order of time, might be shewn in many instances. We shall only mention the two following. Moses died and was buried; but since he appeared with Christ in the mount of transfiguration, his resurrection must have been before his. Lazarus also died

and

\* Luke xxiv. 34.

† Eph. v. 14.

‡ Cor. xv. 16.

\*\* Col. i. 18.

†† Rev. i. 5.

man nature ; but he lives unchangeably, according to his divine nature. " Jesus Christ, the same yes-  
terday, to-day, and for ever."

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and was buried ; but Jesus raised him from the dead, before he either died, or rose from the dead himself. The scriptures cited, then, concerning the priority of our Lord's resurrection, may be understood of him, as rising from the dead by his own power ; as the head of his mystical body ; and as, in the order of nature, the first-fruits of all who sleep in him. In all these respects, he, indeed, has the pre-eminence. We say, then, that " many bodies of saints " which slept, arose" at the time of our Lord's death. And we the rather hold by this opinion, because we are unwilling to drop any thing that seems to strengthen the evidence of our Lord's divinity, especially at a time when such evidence was so precious. But would not the evidence of our Lord's divinity, arising from the resurrection of these saints, have been as precious at the time of his resurrection, supposing them to have risen then ? No ; for his own resurrection was the best evidence of his divinity that could be given. That the resurrection of these saints, then, at the time of our Lord's death, is to be understood as one branch of this evidence, seems to us quite plain, from the testimony of the Centurion, and they who were with him on that occasion. " Now " when the Centurion, and they that were with him watching " Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, " they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God\*." But may not the premises, from which this conclusion is drawn, be understood as the effects of God the Father's power, in testimony of his satisfaction with the service in which Christ had been engaged ? Did not God thus close the awful scene, which his servant had been acting upon the stage of this world, and especially upon Calvary, as an evidence of his having acquitted himself honourably ? If the things referred to were done, as now in question, it does not necessarily follow, that Christ was truly the Son of God, or, according to the manifest import of the words, a divine Person ; for all these things considered abstractly, or by themselves, might have been thus done, and yet the person, of whose service they were intended as a testimony of approbation, have been only finite. Witness how Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and other prophets, were thus honoured ; but it does not follow, that any of these were divine persons. These things in question, indeed, prove that the person by whose power they were done, is divine ; and, therefore, if God the Father did them, that he is divine. But this is not the conclusion drawn by the Centurion, and those that were with him, at the time of our Lord's death ; for they concluded, from the things which they then saw, that Jesus Christ was divine. " Truly this was the Son of God." Christ,

\* Matth. xxvii. 54.

To this evidence may also be added, our Lord's own resurrection from the dead. Had he not been divine in his death, how is it supposable, that he could have taken his human life again in his resurrection? But he had power to take it again. He actually rose from the dead. "He is risen." He "both died, and rose, and revived, that he might "be Lord both of the dead and living." He was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.

But can any creature do such works as these? Can any mere man counteract the laws of nature, and make them produce effects, the very reverse of what they naturally tend to? Can he, either in life, or in a state of death, raise others who are dead and buried? Can he put a veil upon the sun, that there should be darkness over all the land? Can he abrogate the positive precepts and institutions of the Divine Lawgiver? Can he, when dead, raise himself from that state? What mere man can do such wonderful works as these? But we have already seen, that our Lord is equal to all these things. He *is*, therefore, *the true God*.

10. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his upholding and governing all things. That he hath made all things, we have already seen; but having made all things, he also upholds and governs them. Having given being to the whole creation, he also maintains it in all its parts,

Christ, then, was the efficient cause of the things from which they drew this conclusion. What an astonishing testimony was this! Roman soldiers bearing testimony to the truth of Christ's divinity! But the wall of partition, between Jews and Gentiles, was now falling down. The grace of the gospel was now getting vent to the Gentile nations. Nothing, surely, but a divine illumination, could make these soldiers see the divinity of Jesus, as the efficient cause of the wonderful things which took place at the time of his death. Nor could any thing less than a divine impulse, send forth such an honourable testimony from them. Our Lord, then, did evidently shew himself divine, by various miracles which he wrought, even in the article of his own death.

parts, in being. Having given laws to all things, he also maintains these laws. He who gave laws to men and angels, can, and will vindicate the honour of them. He, indeed, holds the reins of universal government in his hand. “In him we live, and move, and have our being: For we are all his offspring.” “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist †.” God “hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all ‡.” The Royal Psalmist, in addressing himself to God, celebrates our Lord’s mediatory dominion, in all this extent, saying, “Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas §.”

But can any creature maintain another in being? Can any mere man, let his endowments be ever so distinguished, uphold and govern all things? Hath any such being “measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out the heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” Can he “fit upon the circle of the earth, and,” in comparison of him, “the inhabitants thereof be as grasshoppers?” Can he “stretch out the heavens as a curtain, and spread them out as a tent to dwell in?” Has he his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds the dust of his feet?” Can he “ride upon the heavens in the help of Jeshurun, and in his excellency upon the sky?” Can he “bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?” Can he “bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, or guide Arcturus with his sons?” Does

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\* Acts xvii. 28. † Col. i. 17. ‡ Eph. i. 22. § Psal. viii. 5.—8.

he know "the ordinances of heaven, and can he set "the dominion thereof in the earth?" Can he "lift "up his voice to the clouds, that abundance of water "may cover him?" Can he "send lightenings, that "they may go, and say unto him, here we are?" Will the sun go back at his command, or put on a veil at the shining of his glory? Can he bring forth the stars as an army to fight for him; or stop the moon in her course till he rout his enemies? Does he sign death's warrant; or do the issues from it belong to him? What mere man can do such things as these? And if there be any that can, let Socinians say who he is. But they must fail in making the attempt. They can, indeed, as little tell how a mere man can do these things we have mentioned, as they can tell how an eternal Father begetteth an eternal Son, or how the satisfaction of our Redeemer, his obedience and suffering unto the death in our stead, is the only meritorious cause of our salvation. None, surely, but he who is the true God, can uphold and govern all things. The same perfections, surely, that were necessary in creation, are also necessary in providence: For providence does certainly mean the continuance of creation, in all the different scales of created existence. But since our Lord upholds and governs all things, he must be *the true God.*

That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his being the object of divine worship. He who made and upholds all things, does certainly deserve their praise and adoration. God hath made all things for himself, for the display of his own glory. This end is gained, even by the inanimate creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world; in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his

" his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run  
 " a race. His going forth is from the end of the  
 " heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and  
 " there is nothing hid from the heat thereof\*." But all things are called upon to praise the name of the Lord. "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord  
 " from the heavens ; praise him in the heights. Praise  
 " ye him, all his angels ; praise ye him, all his hosts †"  
 &c. Is God Creator, then, to be praised by all his works? Jehovah, the personal Word of God, is to be praised by all these works : For "all things were made  
 " by him, and without him was not any thing made  
 " that was made." But this personal Word, being exalted as the horn of his people's salvation, is, in a special manner, their praise ; the great matter of their praise. He who has done more for us than any creature can do ; he who has paid our infinite debt to the offended Deity ; he who delivers us from all our cruel and deadly foes ; he who raises us up from all the ruins of the fall ; he who gives us the blessings of grace and glory ; he, surely, has the most indubitable right to our persons and services. Reason itself cannot but grant this. Who deserves our services, if our best Friend, our best Benefactor does not ? But that these are due to Jesus Christ, might be shewn at great length from scripture. "As I live  
 " saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and  
 " every tongue shall confess to God," i. e. to God our Saviour : "For the Father judgeth no man, but  
 " hath committed all judgment unto the Son ; that all  
 " men should honour the Son, even as they honour the  
 " Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth  
 " not the Father that hath sent him ‡." Accordingly, the saints, in every past period of the church, have worshipped him as the true God. Did not Abram, in the plains of Mamre, profess his faith in him, saying, "My Lord," or Jehovah? And did he not there also confess him to be the Judge of all the earth, who could not but do right? Did not Jacob,

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\* Psal. xix. 1.—6. † Psal. cxlviii. 1, 2. ‡ John xii. 22, 23.

when at the brook Jabbok, pray to him with wrestling, till the breaking of the day, for the blessing? Did not the children of Israel worship him at Horeb? Did not all the patriarchs, prophets, and holy men of old, worship him? And, in the days of his flesh, though ever jealous of his Father's glory, never offending him himself, and always commanding others to give him the things that are his; he not only received the hosannas that were given him by the multitudes, before and behind, as he entered into Jerusalem; but he even vindicated the hosannas that were given him, by the children in the temple. Did not two women, after his resurrection, hold him by the feet and worship him? Did not his disciples worship him when he ascended up into heaven in human nature? "And it came to pass while he blessed them, " he was parted from them, and carried up into "heaven, and they worshipped him, and returned "to Jerusalem with great joy \*." Does not God the Father say, "Let all the angels of God worship "him?" "And one cried unto another, and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole "earth is full of his glory." But this was the glory of Adonai, the basis of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ. And hence the evangelist John, speaking of him, says, "These things said Isaías, when he saw "his glory, and spake of him †." Is not baptism dispensed in his name, as well as in the name of God the Father and God the Spirit? Does he not require us to believe in Himself as we do in God the Father? "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Is not the command of God the Father to the same effect? "And "this is his commandment that we should believe on "the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Will not his servants in heaven, angels and men, serve him equally with God the Father, in the highest strains of praise and adoration for ever and ever? "And I beheld," says the apostle John, "and I heard the voice of many "angels round about the throne, and the beasts and

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\* Luke xxiv. 51, 52.

† John xii. 41.

"the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." All this extent of divine worship, and infinitely more than we can conceive, is due to our Lord Jesus Christ, if God be true, and that he is true, right reason itself does grant.

But will God give his glory to another, or his praise to a mere man ? Will he degrade himself, that he may deify a creature ? That be far from him. He cannot act a part inconsistent with his infinite perfections. Let absurdities be ascribed to his rivals, but not to him. Is any creature, in its most improved, in its most perfect state, capable of bearing the infinite weight of God's glory ? Can any of the productions of time, wear the crown of the Eternal Being ? Were this possible, Rejoice ye inhabitants of hell, ye shall be able to bear an infinite weight of wrath, to satisfy for all your crimes, and so be delivered from your doleful prison, your galling chains, your tormenting flames, your blackness of darkness, your hideous howlings, your most acute pains, your cursed death, and all your countless miseries. What comfort would this prospect, were it well founded, administer to Socinians ? But if a finite subject cannot bear an infinite weight either of glory or wrath, as both scripture and right reason do testify, then, neither shall the damned have hope, nor shall any of the saved become God. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, having divine worship ascribed to him in scripture, must be *the true God*.

12. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, is evident from his being the Judge of the world. He came once into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, to finish the work of redemption, in respect of purchase, by his obedience and suffering unto the death. He comes in the administration of the new covenant, by means of his word, ordinances, and providences, to apply the blessings of redemption to all for whom

whom they were purchased. But he is also to come to judge the world. He will come to judge the world at the last day; when he will bring forth the headstone of the building of mercy with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it; and when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, giving a good account of the whole of his administration in time. And that he is to be the Judge of the world, is abundantly evident in scripture: "For the Father judgeth no man, but " hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and " hath given him authority to execute judgment " also, because he is the Son of Man \*." Our Lord Jesus Christ, as God and man in one person, is to judge the world. Now, if we consider the several parts of the last judgment, it will, to every unprejudiced and intelligent mind, appear evident, that the Judge must be *the true God.*

If we listen to what the scripture says with respect to the person of the Judge, it will inform us, that he is a glorious Person. "When the Son of Man shall " come in his glory †." How glorious was he, even in his state of humiliation, on the mount of transfiguration! How glorious was the appearance he made to Stephen, when dying among the hands of his cruel enemies! And how glorious was the appearance he made to the apostle John, when he saw him in vision, and fell at his feet as dead! But, how much more glorious will his appearance be, when he comes to judge the world at the last day! Then his divinity will shine forth in his human nature, with striking lustre. His human body, then, will be transparent with glory. His glory will outshine, infinitely outshine the sun in his meridian splendour. His light will darken the purest beams of the sun. As if conscious of its inferiority to him, the sun will haste away, to hide itself in obscurity. And hence the apostle John says, "I saw a great white throne, and " Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and " the heaven fled away, and there was no place for  
" them

\* John v. 22.—27.

† Matth. xxv. 31.

"them \*." But what mere man can display such a measure of glory as this? Can any human glory darken the sun, and make heaven and earth to flee away before it?

Jesus Christ is not only to come in his own glory, to judge the world, but he is also to come in the glory of his Father: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father †." God "hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." God the Father being to judge the world by Jesus Christ, this glorious Person will, therefore, come to judge the world in the glory of his Father. Then there will be a glorious display of all the divine perfections, common to the eternal Father, and his eternal Son. Jesus Christ, being to judge the world in human nature, as the Son of man; the Father's glory, in which he is to come as Judge, seems chiefly to refer to his commission and authority, in his official capacity. Christ will represent his Father in the last judgment, as judging in virtue of a commission from him. How glorious, then, must his power and authority be! None may charge him with imposition: None may call his authority in question: There can be no appeal from his sentence: His judgment must be decisive. May we then imagine, will right reason grant, that God could commission a creature, however excellent, to judge the world? If he had done this, where were infinite wisdom and prudence? When one is appointed to execute any business to which he is unequal, do we not censure that appointment as imprudent. But were Christ only a creature, must he not be unqualified for judging the world? No creature, surely, is fit for such a business as this.

Christ

\* Rev. xx. xi.      † Matth. xvi. 27.

Christ being to come in his own and his Father's glory to judge the world, is also to come in the glory of all the holy angels. When he comes to judge the world, all the holy angels will attend him as his retinue and ministers. "For," says he, "whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels\*." The angels will announce to the world, the judgment of the great day. Then all the angelic heavenly host will act as the ministers of the Judge. And hence the spirit of prophecy says, "Thousand thousands ministered unto him." But can any mere man have, can any mere man claim, such a glorious retinue as his due? The holy angels, indeed, do now minister for the saints. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" But they shall wholly minister to Christ, in the judgment at the last day. Their ministry for the saints is of grace, but their ministry to Christ is his due, a debt they owe to him as his creatures. They are his angels; he is their Lord. We are to petition him for the good offices of his angels; but he commands these offices.—The angels will, in the last judgment, act according to his orders. All the glory of their ministry is due to him; but this no creature may claim. It were the height of arrogance for any creature to claim this.

When Christ comes to judge the world, then he will sit upon a glorious throne. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him; then shall he sit on the throne of his glory †." He shall then sit upon "a great white throne." His throne will be a throne of judgment; a throne suitable both to the Judge and the judgment. What a glorious appearance will his throne then make! How admirable will it be in the eyes

\* Luke ix. 26.

† Matth. xxv. 31.

eyes of all faints ! How terrible will it be in the eyes of all sinners ! How will it strike terror into both devils and wicked men ! It will appear to all as the throne, not of a creature, but of God. If we may use the expression, how ridiculous would it be for a creature, a finite being, to sit as judge upon the throne of the last judgment !

The throne being set, then men and devils are to be brought before it. The Judge will raise up the dead out of their graves. He who spake all things into being, can call the dead out of their graves to the judgment. "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation \*." All the devils shall also be parties in the judgment. This they dread : And hence they said to Jesus, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time ?" But what mere man has power and authority to raise the dead, and assemble the world ? Can a finite being call men and devils before him into judgment ?

Parties being assembled, then the books shall be opened. Daniel, speaking of the last judgment, says, "The books were opened." Various books will then be opened ; and men and devils will be judged according to the things written in these books. The book of life will be opened : And hence the apostle John says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened : And another book was opened, which is the book of life †." The book of the divine remembrance will be opened. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it ; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name ." The book of divine revelation will be opened : And hence our Lord says, "He that rejecteth me, and

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" receiveth

\* John v. 28, 29.

† Rev. xx. 12.

Mal. iii. 16.

“ receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day \*.” The book of conscience will be opened. “ If our heart condemn us, “ God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all “ things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, “ then have we confidence towards God †.” By the heart, here, we may understand the conscience ; or, that power of condemning and acquitting, that belongs to the human mind. This power, being exercised in judging now, will also be thus exercised at the last day. The book of providence will also be opened. The whole of providence, respecting both saints and sinners, will then come under review. Moses seems to have had this book in his eye, when, in interceding with God for Israel, he said, “ Yet now, “ if thou wilt, forgive their sin, and if not, blot me, “ I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written ‡.” Or, as if he had said, “ Let not the good offices I have done among this people aggravate “ their sin and misery. If thou wilt not pardon “ them, then let me have no more connection with “ them.” Such are some of the books that will be opened in the last judgment : But who, save the true God, is able to open and read these books ? Can any but he, who is infinite in knowledge, perfectly call the roll of elect men, and place them all on his right hand in the judgment ? Can any other call the roll of sinners, and oblige them all to compear then on his left hand ? Can any but he who is omniscient, fully understand all the thoughts, words, and actions of saints and sinners ? Can any other sum up all that has been done, agreeable and disagreeable, to divine revelation, in all the different ages of time ? Can any other read every conscience, and cause every one read the book of his own conscience, however extensive the records, and obliterated the characters be ? Can any other explain all the mysteries of Providence, during all the vicissitudes of time ? No

*for most*

\* John xii. 48.

† 1 John iii. 20, 21.

‡ Exod. xxxii. 32.

creature

creature, surely, can do these things: And yet, both scripture and right reason agree, that the Judge of the world *must* be capable of doing these things.

All the grounds and evidences of the judgment, being read and clearly stated, then the Judge will give sentence upon all the parties concerned, according to these things. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Turning, as it were, to the miserable company on his left hand, "Then shall he say also unto them, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels \*." Every one then will be sensible of the justness of his sentence. No one will have reason to complain of the smallest injury on the part of the Judge. Sinners are, indeed, represented in scripture, as offering various pleas in their own defence; but being all sensible that they are workers of iniquity, they must all know that their damnation is just. The Judge will then acknowledge and acquit the righteous, upon the ground of his own satisfaction for them, while their own good works will only fall under a secondary consideration, or be produced in the judgment in point of evidence; whereas the works of sinners, being wholly sinful, will then be produced; not only in point of evidence against them, but also as the grounds of their condemnation. Our good works, being imperfect, merit nothing: But "the wages of sin is death," infinite wrath. But who, save the true God, can perfectly discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not? None, but the Divine Shepherd, can fully separate between the sheep and the goats, and give sentence upon them, according to their real character.

The Judge having given sentence upon both saints and sinners, then he will put his sentence in execution.

\* Matth. xxv. 34. and 41.

tion. The execution of it will begin upon sinners. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." And then the righteous shall be welcomed home to their Father's house, the mansions of everlasting bliss. These shall go "into life eternal \*." This is the issue of the judgment. Sinners will then be cast into hell ; and the saints will then be put in possession of eternal glory. These parties will then be placed in two extremes, the extremes of happiness and of misery. "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him ; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." But whence is that creature that can bestow eternal life upon the saints ? Is this at the disposal of any but the true God ? And what creature can cast devils and wicked men into hell, and shut them up there, to be for their crimes punished for ever and ever ? Nor shall Socinians get an outgate here, even by the back door of annihilation : For, though this were not absurd, even in the judgment of right reason, it is as impossible for one creature to annihilate another, as it is for one to cast another into hell.

Upon the whole, then, if the person, who is the Son of God by an eternal generation, the express image or type of God the Father's person ; if he, who is possessed of all divine perfections, the same in substance, equal in power and in glory with God the Father ; if he, who was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, as our representative in the covenant of grace ; if he, who engaged from everlasting to glorify God upon the earth, and to save us with an everlasting salvation ; if he, who takes, and unfolds the book of the divine decrees, which are all one eternal and immanent act of God's free and sovereign will ; if he, who is called, in the most absolute manner, by the names peculiar to the true God ; if he, who has created all things,

\* Matth. xxv. 46.

things, making nonentity the teeming womb of the vast creation ; if he, who has redeemed an elect company of Adam's ruined family, from all the depths of sin and misery to eternal glory ; if he, who upholds and governs all things, both in the material and spiritual world ; if he, who works miracles, such works as no creature of himself can do ; if he, who is worshipped, equal with God the Father, in the church, both militant and triumphant ; and, if he who is to judge the world, both men and devils, at the last day ; if the Person, we say, to whom scripture ascribes these things, be the true God, then our Lord Jesus Christ is most certainly *the true God.*

We shall now conclude this discourse, with some inferences from the subject. *This is the true God :*

And,

1. Since our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth in scripture as a divine Person, then they do greatly err who deny his divinity. Some who are most noted for this, are called Socinians. These deny that our Lord had any being before he was conceived of the Virgin Mary. And so, while they allow him to be an extraordinary man, they deny that he is both God and man in one person. This heresy is, therefore, pregnant with all other heresies that have pestered the Christian Church. A Socinian is an Arminian, a Pelagian, a Deist, an Antichrist, an Arian, an Atheist, and what not ? The fabric they build, upon the burial of Christ's divinity, is most destructive. It will crush the persons, upon whom it falls, down to the lowest hell. Every Socinian, in conscience, is like Simon the sorcerer, in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ ?" "He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son : Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." Nor is this heresy now banished out of our land. It had its advocates and abettors

tors formerly ; but it has these still : " For there are  
" certain men crept in unawares, who were before  
" of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly  
" men, turning the grace of our God into lascivious-  
" ness, and denying the only Lord God, and our  
" Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus saw that offences,  
damnable errors, would come ; but he saw also the  
woful case of their broachers and abettors : For he  
said, and still says, " Wo unto the world because of  
" offences : For it must needs be that offences come :  
" But wo to that man by whom the offence cometh."

2. Since our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God,  
then they are in a most dangerous situation who de-  
ny his divinity. Will a man let his enemy go well  
away ? Will God let his enemies go well away ?  
" He that fitteth in the heavens shall laugh : The  
" Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he  
" speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in  
" his sore displeasure." He will say unto them,  
" Because I have called, and ye refused, I have  
" stretched out my hands, and no man regarded ;  
" but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and  
" would none of my reproof : I also will laugh at  
" your calamity, and will mock when your fear  
" cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation,  
" and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ;  
" when distress and anguish cometh upon you."

God the Father seeketh the honour of Jesus Christ,  
and will fully vindicate the testimony he bears con-  
cerning himself in his word, as the true God, and the  
divine Messiah. Let Socinians, therefore, pretend  
as much regard for God the Father as they please,  
if they do not honour Jesus Christ as the true God,  
God the Father will hold them to be his enemies ;  
and, if mercy prevent not, will honour his eternal  
Son in their eternal damnation. Nay, our Lord Je-  
sus Christ will also plead his own cause with all his  
enemies. They may now treat him as an impostor,  
or deceiver of the people, as the unbelieving Jews

did

did formerly; but sooner or later they shall know that he is the true God: "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large: The pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." But the false prophet is in this fire. All false prophets, all teachers of damnable errors, if mercy prevent not, *shall* be in it. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." If there be one place in hell more hot, more tormenting than another, Socinian teachers, under a mask of Christianity, may expect to be in it, in an eternal state of extreme misery.

3. Since our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, then his church shall not fall totally and finally into ruins. Let hell and earth combine against her, the Lord Christ can and will protect her. And hence the prophet Isaiah says, "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: Thine eyes shall behold Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken: But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby: For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us." Do the under shepherds of Christ's flock make a prey of it? Do they expose the sheep of his pasture to the greatest mischiefs? He is against these shepherds. He will require his flock at their hand. He will save his own, his purchased flock, out of their hand. He will, being divine, cause his sheep to lie down in green pastures, and will lead them beside the still waters. "And they shall no more be a prey to the Heathen, neither shall

" shall the beast of the field devour them ; but they  
" shall dwell safely, and none shall make them a-  
" fraid." Do enemies make many attempts to put  
a stop to the building of mercy ? Do they go to,  
with axes and hammers, to break down the carved  
work of the house of our God ? Do they cast down the  
bulwarks of Zion ? Do they even attempt to dig up  
her foundation ? " Therefore thus saith the Lord  
" God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a  
" stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a  
" sure foundation : He that believeth shall not make  
" haste." God says unto Zion, " No weapon that  
" is formed against thee shall prosper ; and every  
" tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment,  
" thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the  
" servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is  
" of me, saith the Lord." Do enemies endeavour  
to bring a famine of the word of the Lord upon the  
church ; to deprive her of her bread and her water,  
of her heavenly fruits and streams ? God says of eve-  
ry genuine Israelite, " He shall dwell on high : His  
" place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks ;  
" bread *shall* be given him, and his water *shall* be  
" sure." Let the enemies of the church do their  
worst ; let them muster all their forces against her ;  
let them break down her walls to the ground ;  
let them corrupt the waters of the sanctuary ; let them  
cast fire into the place where God's honour dwells ; let them  
hunt the saints like partridges upon the moun-  
tains ; let them pour out their blood about Jeru-  
salem ; and, let them give their flesh to be meat to the  
fowls of heaven : Yet even then, the Lord Christ  
will challenge his enemies, saying, " Who would  
" set the briars and thorns against me in battle ? I  
" would go through them, I would burn them up  
" together." And then, too, he will say of his peo-  
ple, " I give unto them eternal life, and they shall  
" never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of  
" my hand."

4. Since our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, then, surely, it is the duty of Zion's watchmen to stand forth in the defence of his divinity, especially when it is attacked by his enemies, within the pale of his own church. " Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them : Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God ?" Will the faithful centinel be silent, when his prince is threatened ? Will he join in league with his master's enemies ? No, he will not ; but he will then sound an alarm suitable to the danger. Surely, then, the ministers of Jesus Christ should sound an alarm, when his divinity is attacked, even in his own house, by his most wicked foes. Can we be both silent and faithful at such a time as this ? If we altogether hold our peace at this time, yet shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the people of God from another place. No weapon that is formed against Zion shall prosper. God says to his church, " I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine : And all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob." But if we be silent, we need not, in this case, expect to pass unchastised. " Be thou faithful unto the death," is the command of Him whom we serve in the gospel. And, says the apostle Paul, " Behold, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints."

5. Since our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, it must also be the duty of all Christians to stand forth

forth in the defence of his divinity. The divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ ought certainly to be a matter of general concern. It has indeed been, and still is, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. But it is, nevertheless, of the greatest importance to us all. If Christ be not God by nature, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, ye are yet in your sins." You ought, therefore, to look upon such as deny our Lord's divinity, as your most dangerous foes. Supposing, for instance, that your houses were infested by a gang of barbarians; supposing them to be treating your best friends, your dearest relations, with the greatest indignities in your presence; supposing them to threaten yourselves, not only with the loss of your possessions, but of your lives; supposing them to be using means for putting you to a most cruel death, and that the pile were about to be kindled to prey upon you and render you miserable; supposing, we say, these things to be, and yourselves immediately concerned in them, would you then, think you, be at ease and unconcerned? Would you not act more like reasonable beings, if you were to take the alarm, to call in others to your assistance, and to strain every nerve in opposing the common enemy? The application, we apprehend, is easy. What enemy is more dangerous than Socinians? Do they not spurn at the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as a mere fiction, a thing of nought? Do they not set their mouths against the Heavens in their blasphemous talk? Do they not attempt to spoil you of all that is precious, and to cast you soul and body into hell for ever? But these enemies are at no great distance: They are within the pale of a neighbouring church. Nor have we reason to think that they are few. As the leaders of this people are conspicuous, and of extensive influence in the church, we have reason to fear, that they who are

are in danger of being ruined by them are many. Let not, therefore, your hands be slack in such critical circumstances. Call in your God to your aid against these soul-ruining enemies. " And give him " no rest till he establish, and till he make Jeru- " salem a praise in the earth." Say, like Jacob to the Angel, " I will not let thee go, except thou " bless me."

6. Since our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, then the denial of his divinity, in our own land, in a neighbouring church, by some of the most extensive influence among the people, ought to be considered as matter of great mourning, bitter weeping, and deep humiliation at all times ; but especially, on a day set apart for these exercises. The indignities done, by a certain Doctor professing Christianity, to the divine and mediatory character of our Lord Jesus Christ, do certainly call loudly for weeping and mourning before the Lord to-day. Let us all then cry, like the weeping prophet, saying, " Oh " that my head were waters, and mine eyes a foun- " tain of tears, that I might weep day and night for " the slain of the daughter of my people." If we be Zion's children, let us sympathize with our mother. Is the tear upon her cheek ? let it also be on ours. Is she spoiled of her beautiful garments ? let us also put off our ornaments. Are her children weeping ? let us weep with them that weep. Is her King, her Husband, her Lord, wounded in the house of his friends ? let us not be offended because of him, neither forsake him and flee ; but let our exercise correspond to the posture of his affairs. Let us not, however, mourn as those who have no hope ; but let us, prostrating ourselves before the throne of grace and mercy, speak the language of an evangelic faith, saying, " He will turn again, he will have " compassion upon us ; he will subdue our iniqui- " ties ; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the " depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth " to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou " hast

“ hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.  
“ Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion :  
“ For the time to favour her, yea, the set time is  
“ come. For thy servants take pleasure in her  
“ stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the Hea-  
“ then shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the  
“ kings of the earth thy glory. When the Lord  
“ shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.  
“ He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and  
“ not despise their prayer.”

7. Since our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, then let us all be concerned to hold fast the doctrine of his divinity. The improvement of this doctrine, by an evangelic faith, is our very life ; but the final denial of it, will awfully aggravate the wretchedness of our death. Let creature-merit be maintained, and praised ever so high, yet if you finally depend upon it, either in whole or in part, as the ground of your standing before God, you cannot be saved ; for there is no salvation but by free grace, as venting through the cross, or satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ. “ In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.” We do not, therefore, either in whole or in part, merit our own salvation. “ Beware,” then, “ lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” Let us all hear, be jealous of ourselves, and cleave fast to the person and doctrine of Jesus Christ, while he is saying unto us, “ Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the

“ the holy angels.” Are any of you, then, ashamed of Christ? Do any of you deny his divinity? Do you consider him only as a man? Are you ashamed of his cause in the world? If you live and die thus ashamed of Christ, he will also be ashamed of you at the last day. He will deny that you are his disciples. You may profess to be his friends, but he will be ashamed to own you as such. While, then, the day of grace and mercy is continued, be concerned to take your sin and danger under your most serious consideration. After all you have done, to draw forth the fury of the glorious Redeemer upon yourselves, he is calling you to look to himself, and be saved. After all you have done to separate yourselves to the sword of his vindictive justice, he is calling you to match with himself, as your beloved, your best friend, “ Come now,” says he, after all the dishonour you have done him, “ and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” And “ incline your ear, and come unto me: Hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” If ye would be saved, obey these calls, “ Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” We are warranted to say to you, to every one of you, to the greatest sinner among you, “ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.” But if ye will not take heed to divine warnings and threatenings; if you will go on in your

your unbelief, denying God's testimony concerning his Son ; if you will persevere in braving the wrath of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, then know that you shall, when, alas ! too late, be, by your horrible experience, convinced that our Lord Jesus Christ is a divine Person, the same in substance, equal in power and in glory with God the Father, according to the divine testimony borne concerning him, in the words of our text, *This is the true God.*

### F I N I S.

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